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News You Can Use

Lumber Prices Trending Downward

- ♦ The ultrahigh prices of 2x4's and sheets of plywood may be coming to an end! According to a recent report on NPR, retail lumber prices have fallen fifty percent over the past two months. The report also stated that while lumber prices are falling to more reasonable levels, the retail price of materials is still 80% above pre-pandemic prices. Also, as we all know, the price being paid for standing timber has remained relatively stagnant.
- ♦ Following is a link for a quick, 4-minute listen of the entire story >>
<https://www.npr.org/2021/07/08/1013819703/what-the-rise-and-fall-of-lumber-prices-tell-us-about-the-pandemic-economy>

Last Week

State Forester

- ♦ Rob Farrell and Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) participated in the first meeting of the Tree Conservation Work Group. The work group was established by budget language as well as HB2042 and

SB1393 in the 2021 GA session. The purpose was to address concerns regarding tree retention and/or preservation during development in our urban forests. The meeting was facilitated by the Institute for Engagement and Negotiation and generated significant discussion among the stakeholders.

- ◆ Rob and Terry also participated in a conference call with Adrienne Kotula and Ann Swanson of the Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC) and Karen Firehock of the Green Infrastructure Center. The CBC is planning a retreat later in the year focused on the challenges related to increased tree retention and planting. Initiatives that VDOF sponsored or are leading will be a focus of Karen Firehock's presentation at the retreat.
- ◆ Rob Farrell and Dean Cumbia (director, forest resource management) met with professors in the Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and the Environment to discuss collaboration on hardwood forest management on the school's Fishburn Forest.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Terry Lasher met with members of the State Level Coordinating Committee and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to discuss next steps in the full application process for Virginia's Security Corridor Sentinel Landscapes. This spring the VDOF submitted a pre-application to the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership for consideration and was awarded the opportunity to submit a full proposal.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ VDOF Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) crews have completed & transmitted 70 percent of the inventory plots in the current panel of work as of July 1. (FIA staff had completed 60% as of June 1). A year ago, the completion rate for the VA2019 panel was 69 percent, so the FIA crews are maintaining the 5-year cycle plot measurement objective for VDOF.
- ◆ For the quarter ending June 30, of the 13 southern states, Virginia was one of four to meet or exceed the USFS production target.
- ◆ One of the new VDOF USFS Landscape Restoration Grants is entitled Rebuilding Prescribed Burning Capacity for Restoration Landscapes in Virginia. A VDOF committee has been formed and the first in-person meeting was held on June 29. The committee discussed barriers to prescribed burning, and strategies to strengthen burning capacity through VDOF, contractors, and training.
- ◆ Each quarter, VDOF and the Black Family Land Trust communicate and share information. On June 28, VDOF Forest Resource Management and regional staff discussed expanding forestry educational options on the community college level as well as operational scale forest management demonstration projects.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) hosted Dr. Bill Livingston, from the University of Maine, at Matthews State Forest. Dr. Livingston is a specialist in Eastern white pine health and management. While here, he toured several white pine stands in the state forest. Discussion centered around white pine health, specifically the caliciopsis fungus, and white pine needle damage. Dr. Livingston was also interested in the differences in white pine management in Virginia as compared to management in New England. Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), Katlin Dewitt (forest health specialist), Justin Funk, Donnie Garman (area foresters), and

Brad Carico (deputy regional forester) also participated in the meeting and tour. It was a very informative and educational day for all involved.

- ◆ Controlled pollination work on the Lesesne chestnut orchards is nearing completion. Nearly 300 bags have been pollinated on more than 12 parent trees, including the first transgenic pollen crosses.
- ◆ At the loblolly nursery this week VDOF spring inventory was done. The nursery uses sampling techniques and statistics to obtain the number of seedlings in the beds each year. Life history plots will then be installed so germination and other seedling characteristics can be tracked through the growing season.
- ◆ The nursery in recent years purchased a steam generator from Sioux Company. Recently they visited the nursery to film how the nursery set up and installed their generator. See the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CJGKqIM9SM&t=2sv>.

State Forests

- ◆ State Forest staff assisted the New River Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) with a tree seedling giveaway at the Matthews State Forest. Each year a private conservation company donates their leftover seedlings to the SWCD, which then publicizes the giveaway. This year, several thousand seedlings of various species were donated to over 100 people.
- ◆ State Forest staff participated in the Southern Area Blue Incident Management Team (IMT) Operations Section Conference call for Summer Fire Season Readiness.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Eastern Forest Consultants started invasive species control work on the Catawba Hospital and Virginia Tech McCormick Farm state-owned properties. Areas being treated are scheduled for harvest, with the goal of treating the invasives present prior to logging in order to give hardwood regeneration a better chance for reproduction when harvested.

Central Region

- ◆ Justin Barnes (deputy regional forester) met with Kaleigh Pollack, program director with the Monacan Indian Nation (MIN) at the Ancestral Museum, to discuss forest management on MIN-owned lands. Historically, in the piedmont and mountain regions of Virginia, Siouan Indians of the Monacan and Mannahoac tribes lived and were arranged in a confederation ranging from the Roanoke River Valley to the Potomac River, and from the fall line at Richmond and Fredericksburg west through the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Monacan community today centers around Bear Mountain in Amherst County. At this site, a log cabin was built in the late 1870s and used as a church for the Indian people. Later, it functioned as a school. Today, the log cabin is a recognized National Historic Landmark and is the site of the museum. The MIN is interested in learning about the natural resources they have on their properties in Amherst County. Justin will be working to complete two Forest Stewardship plans for them, one at their Ash Memorial tract which is approximately 90 acres and another at the Johns Farm tract which is about 70 acres. The main objective for the tribe for both properties is cultural and historic resources and maintaining the health of the forest.
- ◆ Zach Arnold (area forester) met with 2nd grade students from Spotswood Elementary School at the Edith J Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. He talked to the students about what a forester does and forest ecosystems, while also doing tree identification of native and invasive species.
- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) and Zach Arnold met with 4th and 5th graders from Spotswood Elementary School at the Madison Run Fire Trail on the Shenandoah National Park. They

talked to the students about several topics including tree identification, ecosystems, and forest management.

- ♦ Jordan Herring (senior area forester) led a virtual presentation for a climate action group for Lansdowne Woods, a 55-and-over condominium community in Loudoun County with a resident population of more than 1500. Jordan informed the group of the services that the VDOF provides and important forestry issues in Virginia, such as the impacts of invasive species, tree harvesting, and the benefits that trees in urban areas provide. Jordan will be working closely with key members of the group and the landscape manager to work on a tree planting and maintenance plan for the community, which will provide multiple benefits, including improved water quality, reduced heat island effects, carbon sequestration and aesthetics.
- ♦ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) gave two tree planting demonstrations at the Mount Vernon Expo. Jim was able to reconnect with partners he hadn't seen since the COVID-19 outbreak and make some new contacts in an effort to increase awareness and efforts related to the social, environmental, and economic benefits trees provide.

Eastern Region

- ♦ Alanna Ostrowski (forest technician), Jeremey Falkenau (senior area forester), and John Hisghman (deputy regional forester) attended a Richmond-Crater Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment Briefing for the new PlanRVA hazard mitigation plan. VDOF provided input about historic wildfire incidents throughout the PlanRVA region.

- ♦ Evan Richardson (area forester) and Scott Bachman (senior area forester) assisted a number of Old



Dominion University (ODU) graduate and undergraduate students in learning to use their increment borers. The students are working on some projects on event frequency and need to know how to age a tree. Everyone gathered at the “historic boxed stump” on the ODU property at Zuni. This stump shows two “boxes” or cavities that were cut out of the tree to collect sap for the production of naval stores. It is estimated that the tree finally died from the wounds or was harvested prior to chain saws, so probably more than one hundred years in the past. This longleaf pine



stump is solid as a rock. We used an 18 inch bore near the base of the stump to try to get an age determination. The core removed was soaked with resins and had a spectacular pine smell.

Approximately 120 rings were identified without a hand lens and the center of the stump was not reached. It is possible this tree germinated before Europeans settled in North America! (Pictured)

Western Region

- ♦ Adam Cumpston (water quality specialist) and Collin Sapp (forest technician) visited multiple local Russell County government offices to make introductions and facilitate collaboration as part of Collin's training program. Discussions took place with representatives from agencies including Virginia Cooperative Extension, Russell County Sheriff's Office 911 Dispatch, Tax Assessor/GIS Mapping, Board of Supervisors Office, Russell County Emergency Management, District and Circuit Court Clerks, and Lebanon Police Department.

- ◆ Chad Austin (water quality engineer) met with USFS employees to review the Round Mountain Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) timber harvest. Many topics were discussed during the on-site meeting; skid trail layout, haul road layout, stream crossing armament, future sale boundaries, and riparian buffers. Participants surveyed the harvests for regeneration, vegetation establishment, and Best Management Practices (BMP) structure installations. Those in attendance left with a better understanding of each agency's goals and requirements. The discussions and evaluations will assist future collaborative efforts with the Good Neighbor Authority.

Public Information

- ◆ Jon Perry (forest technician), supported public information by covering the laurel wilt training with Tennessee Department of Forestry and producing a video highlighting the training. The video will be shared with staff and partners who were unable to attend the training session.
- ◆ Plans for promoting Virginia Forest Products Week (October 17 – 23) have begun. Michelle Stoll (public information director), Rachel Harris (forest utilization and marketing specialist), Sabina Dhungana (utilization and marketing program manager) and Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) met last week to identify outreach and communication opportunities. The committee aims to produce a short video promoting forest products and sustainability that features key spokespersons at industry and forest locations. Additionally, we will seek a proclamation from the Governor's office recognizing Virginia Forest Products Week.

News Clips

- ◆ [Enviva Forest Conservation Fund Awards 2021 Grants](#)
- ◆ [These 'supertrees' are engineered to capture more carbon](#)
- ◆ [Governor Northam Announces Lumber Exporting Company to Establish Operations in Suffolk](#)
- ◆ [Timber exporter building \\$1.1M facility in Suffolk](#)
- ◆ [Grant Will Help Add 789 Acres of Conservation Land In Accomack](#)
- ◆ [Buckingham brush fire sparks big response](#)
- ◆ [Coastal Land Trust purchases 1,048 acres north of Navassa](#)
- ◆ [In battle of ports, exporter taps Virginia over Wilmington for expansion](#)